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AUTHOR Ediger, Marlow
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ABSTRACT

Teachers, supervisors, and administrators need to have perspectives pertaining to the future in a quality reading program. A forward looking reading program emphasizes the following aspects: (1) starting instruction where each student presently is in achievement; (2) teaching diverse word recognition techniques; (3) increasing the purpose for learning in acquiring content; (4) improving the quality of basal textbooks as well as trade books; (5) providing more meaningful content; and (6) developing a better sequence of reading material content. Inservice education is needed to upgrade the teaching of reading as well as to develop a forward looking reading program. These inservice education approaches include: doing research to solve problems in reading; organizing faculty meetings to discuss specific problems in reading instruction; and attending professional meetings devoted to reading instruction. (MM)

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A FORWARD LOOKING READING PROGRAM

BY

DR. MARLOW EDIGER

PROFESSOR OF EDUCATION

NORTHEAST MISSOURI STATE UNIVERSITY

KIRKSVILLE, MISSOURI 63501

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A FORWARD LOOKING READING PROGRAM

Teachers, supervisors, and administrators need to have perspectives pertaining to the future in a quality reading program. Reading - the first of the 3 r's - is a basic in the curriculum. Reading skills, well developed, are vital to success in science, social studies, mathematics, health, as well as other curriculum areas in the school setting. Few, if any, would argue that success in reading achievement is necessary to secure and maintain a good job or position in society.

Which criteria may emphasize a forward looking reading program?

Viewing the Future in Reading

Based on what <u>is</u> presently in reading instruction, what can be done to increase knowledge and skills, as well as attitudes?

A forward looking reading program will emphasize starting instruction where each student is presently in achievement. Gearing instruction beyond the present achievement level in reading makes for failure on the part of students. Making learnings too easy provides for situations involving boredom and a lack of challenge to the learner. With more sophisticated pretests and improved teacher observation as an evaluation technique, students should begin reading instruction harmonizing with their individual present levels of attainment. By starting with his/her own unique achievement level, each student will make increased progress from ongoing reading instruction. Guesswork will be minimized in determining entry levels of student progress in reading.

A forward looking reading program will stress balance in emphasis upon word recognition skills. Excesses will be minimized. Deficiencies in emphasis will also be, in degrees, a thing of the past. Each student then will experience teaching of phonics which assists in optimal word recognition skills. Excesses or deficiencies in the teaching of each word recognition skill will be greatly minimized. Rational balance among phonics, syllabication, structure analysis, picture clues, context clues, and configuration clues will be in evidence.

Currently, much debate is in evidence pertaining to the degree of emphasis placed upon phonics instruction. In the future, a more accurate assessment will be made as to the amount of emphasis to be placed upon phonics instruction for each learner. Phonics will not be omitted, nor will students complete sequential pages in workbooks involving phonetic analysis when proficiency in reading is already in evidence.

Diverse kinds of comprehension skills will be stressed continually in the teaching of reading. Reading to secure facts, directions, and order in subject matter will remain salient. However, major stress will be placed on higher levels of cognition such as critical and creative thinking, as well as problem solving. Reading for facts will become the building blocks for more complex facets of cognition. Reading to follow directions as a comprehension skill will be followed by critical and creative reading as ordered skills. Improved sequence in acquiring content as a comprehension skill may also be emphasized within a problem solving framework in reading.

In addition to higher cognitive goals being emphasized in the reading curriculum, learners will increasingly read for sheer enjoyment.

Thus, an attitudinal objective will also become paramount in reading. Quality attitudes developed within learners will aid these students to become greater consumers of literature.

Improved methods of assisting students to perceive purpose will be in evidence. Purpose indicates a desire to learn and achieve in reading. Preservice and inservice education will stress teachers developing purpose within students in learning to read. With purpose, an increased energy level is available for learning to read as well as to enjoy content acquired. Inductive and deductive procedures may be utilized to encourage purpose to attain word recognition and comprehension skills. Perceiving purpose in learning emphasizes effort put forth to develop knowledge, skills, and attitudinal goals.

Basal readers, as well as trade books, will continually improve in stressing inherent subject matter that is interesting to learners. With interesting content to be read, the reader and the reading curriculum become one and not separate entities. Interest in learning provides for stimulation and motivation. The act of reading will increasingly become its own reward. Reading to solve purposeful problems as well as for quality sheer pleasure may well emphasize subject matter of interest to students in reading.

Content in reading materials will also become more meaningful. A greater variety of subject matter and materials will make for learners personally relating themselves to the reading curriculum. Facts, concepts, and generalizations that are meaningful make sense to the reader. They are understood by the reader.

Sequence in knowledge and skills objectives will become increasingly significant. To achieve any objective, be it general or specific, teachers of reading need to determine a starting point for each student. The starting point needs to pinpoint where each student is presently in reading achievement. This is a first basic or prerequisite in the teaching of reading. Then, a logical or psychological reading curriculum in terms of sequence needs to be developed. In a logically sequenced curriculum, the ordered objectives are predetermined for students to attain in reading. In a psychological procedure, the learner sequences his/her own experiences through self-selection of content in reading. Be it a logical or psychological reading curriculum, the reader needs to perceive order in learning. Only then can success be in evidence in reading achievement.

Procedures in Inservice Education

Reading teachers need to keep abreast of trends in teaching. To evaluate what <u>is</u> presently being emphasized in the teaching of reading to what <u>should be</u> is a major objective in the curriculum. From the actual to the ideal must be stressed in the teaching of reading. Which means of growth and achievement in the teaching of reading should be emphasized?

Teachers of reading need to have access to a quality library in the school setting. Diverse periodicals, as well as teacher education textbooks, need to be available for reading teachers to glean content to improve the curriculum. Inservice days need to be available for

teachers to study literature in the teaching of reading. New ideas acquired from reading need to be appraised in terms of quality criteria. Those ideas meeting up with desired criteria should be tested in actual teaching-learning situations. Hopefully, students will attain at a more optimal rate of achievement in reading.

Workshops endeavors should assist in improving the reading curriculum. For the workshop, an agreed upon theme should be in evidence. A large group session for all participants to identify vital problems in the teaching of reading should be in evidence. Committees or small group endeavors should follow. Participants should choose which committee to serve on to solve relevant problems in the teaching of reading. There are also individual concerns and interests in reading instructions. Thus, the reading teacher individually needs to select and attempt to solve problems students experience in reading. Adequate resources, such as reading and audio-visual materials need to be available to participants in the workshop. Consultant assistance should also be in evidence. Each teacher of reading needs to achieve optimally in the workshop.

Faculty meetings with carefully selected objectives might be beneficial to reading teachers. Goals for sequential faculty meetings might include diagnosis and remediation of specific problems experienced by students in reading. Or, assisting students to achieve in a holistic program of reading instruction. Each faculty meeting devoted to improving the reading curriculum must focus on essential goals of instruction. Trivia and the routine need to be eliminated. Creativity within teachers needs to be released within the framework of faculty

meetings to provide a forward looking reading program for students. Material and human assistance need to be given to assist teachers to teach reading creatively, utilizing the best procedures possible to stimulate individual optimal progress.

Professional meetings devoted to the teaching of reading might well provide knowledge to reading teachers in assisting goal attainment of students. Be it state or national conventions for teachers of reading, worthwhile sessions should be in the offing. With expenses paid to these convention(s), teachers need to choose general sessions and sectional meetings which improve teaching skills in reading. New ideas are needed by reading teachers to increase student progress in reading.

Attending college/university classes in the teaching of reading further provides opportunities for the teacher to learn that which is utilitarian and represents quality. The course work taken may lead to an advanced graduate degree. Highly competent college/university instructors should teach teachers in reading instruction methodology. Content emphasized by the college/university instructor should be tried out by the classroom teacher in actual teaching-learning situations. The classroom teacher may then report back to members of the college/university course on the consequences of utilizing the new approach in reading instruction.

Independent studies may be made by the teacher on a specific facet of reading instruction. Perhaps, the reading teacher faces a problem with a student having dyslexia. The classroom teacher then studies using a variety of relevant reference sources, means of remedying the identified problem. From the data acquired, the reading teacher tries

the new procedure acquired on dyslexia students. Feedback from each student reveals the success of utilizing the new procedures in teaching.

Reading teachers, as further means of inservice education, might engage in conducting research studies. A treatment group receiving the new method of teaching may be contrasted with a control group. Internal validity must be proper and appropiate in the study. Thus, the treatment should make the difference in achievement between the two groups. Considerable knowledge and utilization of statistics are necessary to conduct quality research studies. Growth in research methodology and in the teaching of reading should be an end result.

A planned series of meetings may be held for reading teachers within a school or school system. These meetings should have definite objectives for teacher attainment. The ultimate goal should be to improve the reading curriculum for all students. Each session should have reference materials and consultants available to participants.

In Summary

To develop a forward looking reading program stresses:

1. starting instruction where each student presently is in achievement.
2. balance in teaching diverse word recognition techniques to students.
3. appropiate emphasis upon each comprehension skill.
4. increased purpose for learners in acquiring content.
5. improved quality of basal textbooks as well as trade books.
6. more meaningful content than formerly.
7. better sequence of content for students to read.

Inservice education is needed continually to upgrade reading skills as well as to develop a forward looking reading program. These inservice education approaches are:

1. teacher's reading literature from the local school library.
2. workshop procedures with large groups, committee endeavors, and individual study.
3. faculty meetings with specific problems in the teaching of reading to solve.
4. attendance at professional meetings devoted to the teaching of reading.
5. participation in college/university course work to improve the reading curriculum.
6. completion of independent studies pertaining to assisting specific readers to achieve at a higher level.
7. doing of research to solve problems in reading.
8. a planned series of meetings with the end result being to develop a forward looking reading program.